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AUTHOR Reed, Donald B.
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ABSTRACT

A formally conducted field study was used to investigate the work of vice-principals of eight large Southern California high schools and the relationship of their work to the school as an organization. Most of the vice-principals studied deal with student discipline, but four have important discipline responsibilities, which they exercise by patrolling their campuses and using personal presence and different images--"father confessor," for instance. Data analysis was based on the idea that schools provide two categories of activities--student transformation (normally teachers' responsibility) and organizational stability (administrators' responsibility). Organizational stability is established in curriculum and extracurriculum areas, the first of which is manifested in the schools' master schedules and the second in their activity calendars--collectively called school rules. Further, organizational stability is maintained by monitoring through direct observation and referral systems, supporting activities that reinforce proper student conduct, and remediating through discipline disrupting situations. Vice-principals generally find sanctions only moderately effective. Consequently, they primarily employ their own personal presence to remedy misconduct--a six-step process involving interaction rituals. The study includes a bibliography. (KS)

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THE WORK OF THE SECONDARY VICE PRINCIPALSHIP:

A FIELD STUDY

Donald B. Reed
Washington State University

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THE WORK OF THE SECONDARY VICE PRINCIPALSHIP:

A FIELD STUDY

Introduction

Virtually all comprehensive public secondary schools in the United States with enrollments of 600 or more have a full-time administrative position with the title of vice principal (or some variation of this title). The position with respect to the organization is an ambiguous one. On the one hand, the position is a public testimony of the relatively high status of a school. The position of vice principal indicates that a school has sufficient size, wealth, and complexity to warrant at least two administrators. On the other hand, the position of vice principal stands as a public testimony that a school is having problems serious enough to warrant a full-time administrator who serves as school disciplinarian. Hence, the position of vice principal simultaneously conveys status yet makes the status of the school questionable.

The organizational ambiguity of the role is also reflected in personal testimonies of vice principals. The role of the secondary vice principal has been simultaneously characterized as "hatchet man" (Hurley, 1965), "activity coordinator" (Stokes, 1973), "handy man" (Syfert, 1954), and "fire fighter" (Laughery, 1959). Such descriptions suggest that the position does not involve authentic administrative activities and that if a school were organized and administered properly, the activities associated with the position would be substantively different.

Over the past fifty-six years many aspects of the secondary vice principalship and personal characteristics of vice principals have intrigued investigators. The existence and distribution of the position

of vice principal have been studied (Austin and Brown, 1970; Brandes, 1949; Riggs, 1939; Reavis and Woellner, 1928). The personal characteristics of vice principals have been investigated (Austin and Brown, 1970; Long, 1957; Martin, 1958; Riggs, 1939; Wright, 1939). The qualities of the role of vice principal have received considerable attention (Austin, 1972; Austin and Brown, 1970; Boardman, Gran, and Holt, 1946; Brown and Rentschler, 1973; Coppedge, 1968; Davis and Moore, 1965; Hurwitz, 1957; Jarrett, 1958; Kindsvatter and Tosi, 1971; Long, 1957; Martin, 1958; McDonough, 1970; Pfeffer, 1955; Riggs, 1939; Strang, 1932; Van Eman, 1926; Weiss, 1953; Wright, 1939). Studies of job satisfaction and attitudes of vice principals have been conducted (Austin and Brown, 1970; Bolden, 1956; Garawski, 1978; Kindsvatter and Tosi, 1971; Martin, 1958). Research regarding the career characteristics of individuals who have been or are vice principals has been reported (Austin and Brown, 1970; Brown and Rentschler, 1973; Wright, 1939).

In spite of the relatively long history and abundance of published works, the nature of the work associated with the vice principalship has escaped clear conceptualization and the relationship associated with the work of the vice principalship to the school as an organization has remained elusive. Since 1926 many of the studies have addressed the same or similar research questions. In combination these studies have produced a considerable quantity of information, yet have provided little understanding of the vice principal's work and its relationship to the school. Most studies have focused on task analysis employing data gathered through survey instruments (Austin and Brown, 1979, is a notable exception). This line of inquiry has not been particularly fruitful because most of the survey instruments have been designed around normative conceptions of the

vice principalship and, hence, have not allowed for insightful inquiry regarding the fundamental nature of the work associated with the secondary vice principalship and the relationship of the work to the school as an organization.

The Study

As a response to the literature, a limited study was conducted to investigate the nature of the work associated with the secondary vice principalship in large, comprehensive, American public high schools. Two questions guided and directed the inquiry. First, what is the nature of the work associated with the secondary vice principalship? And, secondly, what is the relationship of the work associated with the vice principalship to the high school as an organization? The overall purpose of the study was to discover the outlines of a grounded theory relating the nature of the work associated with the secondary vice principalship and the school as an organization.

Following the tradition established by Glaser and Strauss (1967) for discovering grounded theory, qualitative research methods guided the study. Following Douglas' (1976) notion of "mixed strategies," several sources provided data for the present study; one was more important than the others.

The most important source of data was a formally conducted field study (Schatzman and Strauss, 1973). Consistent with field research procedures, a small but carefully selected sample of vice principals was identified for inclusion in the study. Eight principals holding positions in three large comprehensive public high schools in two medium-size school districts located in a southern California county were included in the study. Four of the eight vice principals volunteered to be the focus

of the study. Each of the four had important responsibilities for student discipline.

Data regarding the work of the four vice principals and their respective schools were gathered through interviews, field observations, and a variety of documents. Semistructured open-ended interviews lasting about one and one-half hours were held with two of the vice principals prior to conducting field observations. Informal interviews were held with all the vice principals during the course of field observations. Nearly twenty-eight hours of intensive and systematic field observations were made while following the vice principals through their work. About seven hours were spent with each vice principal. During the course of field observations, relevant documents were collected. Following the interviews and field observations, field notes were expanded to contain details which could not be spontaneously recorded.

In comparison to the field study, other sources of data were less formal in character. These include personal experiences of the author as a secondary teacher and vice principal, on-site informal observations of and conversations with a number of secondary vice principals, and off-site informal conversations with numerous vice principals.

It is important to emphasize that the formally conducted field study provided most of the data for the present study. Data gathered by informal means were used principally as validity checks, and in some cases, enrichment of formally collected field data.

This study does not purport to be a definitive conceptualization of the work associated with the secondary vice principalship. It is intended, however, to be a first approximation towards a theoretical understanding of the work typically associated with the secondary vice principalship in large, comprehensive, American public high schools.

Narrative

Mrs. Dillon and Mr. Michaels are the only vice principals at Mountain View High School, the only school in the Mountain View School District. Both vice principals are in charge of student discipline, yet each has other responsibilities. Mrs. Dillon and the school principal prepare the school's master schedule while Mr. Michaels serves as the school's athletic director and oversees the school's student activity program.

Both James D. Nelson and William C. Roger High Schools are in the Rancho Serra School District, and both have similar administrative arrangements. Each high school has three vice principals. One vice principal at each school is in charge of the guidance and counseling office and has the responsibility for developing the school's master schedule. The other two vice principals at each school have responsibilities which include student discipline.

At Rogers High School, Mr. Krough is in charge of student discipline, serves as the school's athletic director, and has overall responsibility for student activities. The other vice principal at Rogers, who has responsibilities for student discipline, specializes in student attendance problems. At Nelson High School, Mr. Graham is in charge of student discipline as well as being responsible for coordinating the school's student activity program. The other vice principal at Nelson High, who is also in charge of student discipline, has the responsibility for the student attendance office.

The responsibilities of the eight vice principals included in the study are shown in Figure 1.

District	High School	Vice Principal	Responsibilities
Rancho Serra	James D. Nelson	Mr. Graham* Mr. Miller Mr. Lee	Student Discipline/Student Activities Student Discipline/Student Attendance Counseling/Curriculum (Master Schedule)
	William C. Rogers	Mr. Krough* Mr. Knight Mr. Brown	Student Discipline/Athletic Director/ Student Activities Student Discipline/Student Attendance Counseling/Curriculum (Master Schedule)
Mountain View	Mountain View	Mrs. Dillon* Mr. Michaels*	Student Discipline/Master Schedule Student Discipline/Athletic Director/ Student Activities

Figure 1. Vice Principals and Their Respective Responsibility at Different High Schools.

*The work of these vice principals was the primary focus of the study.

Although Mountain View, James D. Nelson, and William C. Roger High Schools are not all in the same district, they have much in common. All have about 1,900 students enrolled, serve grades nine through twelve, have both a comprehensive curriculum and a varied student activities program, and are racially integrated.

In appearance the schools have similar features. Each school consists of a cluster of one story buildings arranged around a central quadrangle on a site of about 50 acres. The building at each school which houses the main office complex stands at the front of the cluster and can be easily identified by a flag pole standing nearby. Along the sides of the schools are paved parking lots, one for students, another for staff, and still another for visitors. At the rear of each campus is a large grass-covered athletic field.

Mrs. Dillon and Mr. Michaels at Mountain View, Mr. Krough at Rogers, and Mr. Graham at Nelson each have private offices in a central location in the main office complex. Their offices are relatively small, about fifteen feet square, and contain a desk, several chairs, and a bookcase. The furniture is used but not worn. With the exception of Mr. Graham, all have windows in or near their offices which provide each vice principal with a view of an of important campus area. None of the vice principals teach classes and all have few scheduled commitments during the school day. All answer their own phones and none have a private secretary. Outside each vice principal's office and near a secretary's desk is a short line of chairs. Students referred to the office sit in these chairs while waiting for the vice principal.

The four vice principals all have important responsibilities with regard to student discipline. Discipline involves much more than just

reprimanding students and dispensing punishments. It means knowing what is going on in their respective schools, particularly when students are not in classes. To find out what is going on, all of the vice principals patrol their campuses during the times of the day when problems are most likely to occur, before school, during breaks and lunch, and in places where problems are likely to occur, behind buildings and in certain rest-rooms. Furthermore, the vice principals keep an eye on students who are likely to be at the center of problems. The vice principals believe that if they patrol their campuses, they will be able to deal with problems before they get out of hand.

When student problems occur, the vice principals act swiftly. For minor problems, verbal commands are usually all that is necessary to remedy a situation. Students involved in more serious problems are sent immediately "to the office." When very serious problems occur, the students involved are immediately escorted by the vice principals to their offices.

The vice principals attempt to deal with student problems using their own personal presence involving different images. High visibility on campus is the main form of presence. The images include what Mr. Michaels refers to as being a "policeman" and a "father confessor." In the police image, the vice principals command, warn, threaten, and humiliate. In the father confessor image, the vice principals listen and empathize when students confess and apologize. Only when their presence and images prove ineffective do the vice principals use formal punishment.

Getting out on campus and being visible also has a more pleasant side for the vice principals. It provides them an opportunity to visit and speak with students informally, not necessarily in the role of school

disciplinarian. For example, when problem students are not in trouble, the vice principals make a point of dealing with them in a cordial and friendly way. Being visible on campus requires that the vice principals be present at most traditional gatherings and ceremonies, for example, pep rallies and school dances. Hence, their presence at and participation in these events allows them to present images other than those of policeman and father confessor.

It has been noted that all of the vice principals directly involved in the study have other assignments in addition to student discipline. These responsibilities are important, yet patrolling, disciplining, and responding to a variety of other problems and emergencies all take precedence over other assignments. The work associated with master schedules, student activities, and athletic direction is typically sandwiched in among activities associated with student discipline and/or delayed to times when students are not on campus.

The work of the vice principals, primarily student discipline, is physically and emotionally taxing. It is physically demanding because of the necessity to be constantly on the move most of the school day. It is emotionally draining because of the continued exposure to problems which may not have immediate solutions.

Analytic Framework

Mitchell and Spady (1977) argue that for analytic purposes schools can be considered to have two essential and interdependent categories of component activities. One category is composed of activities oriented to changing or transforming individual students; the other category is composed of activities oriented to stabilizing the school as an organization. It is the teachers who are primarily, yet not exclusively,

responsible for component activities which involve changing or transforming students. In schools the primary arena for transforming students is the classroom. Whereas teachers have the primary responsibility for student transformational activities, it is school administrators who have primary, yet not exclusive, responsibility for maintaining stability. Organizational stabilizing activities occur mainly outside of classrooms.

Mitchell and Spady argue that with respect to students, schools maintain organizational stability in two important ways. One way is through regulating student behavior; the other is by encouraging students to assume traditional organizational values. Individuals in a collectivity, be they students or otherwise, whose behavior is regulated and whose values are homogeneous form an orderly, cohesive, and stable unit.

The arguments of Mitchell and Spady suggest that student transformational activities and organizational stabilizing activities can and do work in opposition to one another. Organizational stabilizing activities are oriented to establishing regularity within the school and getting all students to comply with a uniform set of regulations and perpetuating traditional organizational values and getting all students to assume this collection of values. On the other hand, student transformational activities are oriented to getting individual students to master new and different skills and to assume new and different beliefs.

For most students newly acquired skills are consistent with organizational regulations and newly assumed beliefs are congruent with organizational values. However, the fit between individual transformation and organizational stabilization activities will never be perfect. There will

always be some students who, in differing degrees, do not follow organizational regulations and/or who do not assume organizational values because transformational process presently are imperfect and individuals always retain some control over their own conduct. Those students whose behavior varies from organizational regulations and/or whose beliefs deviate from organizational values stand both as a symbolic and substantive threat to organizational stability. Inasmuch as school administrators have the primary responsibility for activities involving organizational stability, problematic and uncertain student conduct with respect to organizational regulations and values falls on the shoulders of school administrators.

It is important to note that the ideas of Mitchell and Spady did not guide data collection in the field study. Their theoretical notions did, however, provide the basis for analyzing formally collected field data.

The Analysis

The Establishment of Organizational Stability

For the high schools included in the study, and for most large public comprehensive high schools in general, organizational stability is established in two separate, yet related, domains. These include the curriculum and extracurriculum. In general, the curriculum includes the courses offered by the school. The extracurricular, frequently referred to as student activities, includes athletic teams, student government, clubs, and social activities provided by the school. Participation by students in the curricular domain is compulsory, whereas participation in the extracurriculum is voluntary.

The curricular domain is largely rooted in and regulated by state laws and is the translation of these laws. Some of these laws regulate

the school in establishing the curriculum; others regulate student participation in the curriculum. With respect to schools, laws specify which courses high schools must offer and which courses may be offered. Additionally, laws specify the amount of instructional time required for courses (per week and per term). With respect to students, state laws specify participation in terms of attendance, conduct, and graduation requirements.

The organizational manifestation of the curriculum is the school's master schedule. The master schedule specifies what classes are taught, what teachers teach what classes, and when and where the classes are offered. Springing from the master schedule are individual student schedules. An individual schedule lists what classes a student is taking during the academic year, the time of day the classes are taken, where the classes are held, and from what teachers the classes are taken. In a fundamental way, the master schedule regulates the school lives of students (and for that matter, teachers). Furthermore, the regularity of the school is largely embodied in the master schedule.

The extracurricular domain largely springs from and reflects community values. Some values reflect community desires for the school to provide certain traditional activities and events. Athletic teams, interest clubs, and annual social gatherings are typically among these. Other community values reflect desires regarding the character of participation of students in traditional activities. The appropriate public roles of boys as young men and girls as young women reflect community values regarding the character of student involvement in student activities.

The organizational manifestation of the extra curriculum is the school's activity calendar. It is not uncommon for student activity calendars to be prominently displayed in a vice principal's office. The activity calendar specifies what activities will be held during the school year, and when and where the activities will take place. Springing from the activity calendar are individual student activity calendars. Students may or may not keep personal activity calendars as such, but students speak in terms of "going out for," being "out for," being "in," and "going to" a variety of school activities. Although individual students may not maintain written activity calendars, they keep mental calendars. In a fundamental way the activity calendar promotes values deemed appropriate for students. Furthermore, the values of the school are largely embodied in the activity calendar.

Student conduct arises as students fulfill their scheduled class obligations and meet their activity commitments. Not all students, however, conduct themselves in compliance with the regularity embodied in the master schedule and/or conform with the values embodied in the activity calendar. Categories of conduct which typically vary from organizational regularity can be viewed as regulations. Similarly, categories of student conduct which typically deviate from the organizational values can be viewed as norms. The regulations associated with the master schedule and the norms associated with the activity calendar are formalized by the schools and collectively called school rules. Some rules tend to reflect regulations, for example, rules dealing with "tardiness," "cutting classes," or "truancy." Other rules tend to reflect school norms, for example, "conduct unbecoming a school officer," or

"inappropriate dress." Most rules, however reflect both regulations and norms, for example, "disrupting a class" or "fighting."

The Work of the Vice Principalship in the
Establishment of Organizational Stability

In the three schools where the study was conducted, six of the eight vice principals have substantial responsibilities with respect to the establishment of organizational stability. At Nelson High School, Mr. Lee establishes the master schedule almost independently. The same is true for Mr. Brown at Rogers High School. At Mountain View High School, the master schedule hangs in Mrs. Dillon's office, however both she and the school principal develop the schedule.

At Nelson High School, Mr. Graham is in charge of the student activity calendar and all student activities must be cleared and scheduled through him. At Nelson there is an athletic director who oversees all interscholastic athletics and a teacher who oversees other student activities. It is Mr. Graham, however, who has the responsibility for coordinating all student activities by virtue of maintaining the activity calendar. Mr. Michaels at one time had direct responsibility for all aspects of student activities including interscholastic athletics, student government, clubs, and the like. Now a teacher serves as athletic director and another serves as activities coordinator. Yet, Mr. Michaels retains overall responsibility for overseeing the school activity calendar. Mr. Krough at Rogers High School serves as the athletic director, coordinates the activity calendar, and supervises a teacher who serves in the capacity of activities director.

At each high school included in the study, one vice principal has complete responsibility for, or plays an important role in, the development

of the master schedule. Similarly, at each school one vice principal has important coordinating responsibilities with respect to the activity calendar. It is fair to assert that the establishment of the school as an organization with respect to the master schedule and student activity calendar are tasks associated with the vice principalship of large, comprehensive, public high schools.

The Maintenance of Organizational Stability

In the high schools included in the study, and for most public high schools in general, organizational stability is viewed as problematic and is maintained through three related administrative activities. The first is monitoring (Wolcott, 1973) the school and its immediate environment for indications that organizational regularity (as embodied in and manifested through the master schedule) and the values (as embodied in and manifested through the activity calendar) prevail. The second activity is supporting (Goffman, 1971) situations which are interpreted as reinforcing the organizational regularity and/or promoting organizational values. The third and final activity is remediating (Goffman, 1971) situations interpreted as upsetting organizational regularity and/or threatening organizational values. Collectively these three activities are referred to by school administrators as the task of supervision (Mitchell & Spady, 1977): the supervision of the buildings and grounds, the supervision of teachers and staff, and the supervision of students.

The Work of the Vice Principalship in Maintaining Organizational Stability

Although the establishment of the master schedule and/or the development of the activity calendar (and other related activities) are important tasks

associated with the secondary vice principalship, they are not the focus of vice principal's attention during the school day when students are present. What commands and demands the attention of vice principals are the three related activities which have been referred to as supervision. In the three schools, six of the eight vice principals spend the vast majority of their time and attention during the working day on supervision.

Most, yet not all, supervision involves individual student conduct. Student compliance with organizational regularity and conformance with organizational values is always viewed as problematic by the vice principals. For example, at 8:20 on a Monday morning when Mrs. Dillon was settling in to complete a federal audit report, she noticed through a window near her office a sizeable group of students beginning to congregate in the central quadrangle. Mrs. Dillon looked at the group and said spontaneously, "Look at that group. What's going on? I need to find out." She then proceeded quickly out of her office to investigate. Mrs. Dillon soon discovered that the students were listening to a group of girls announce the newly elected cheerleaders. Although the situation turned out to be legitimate, Mrs. Dillon did not at first view the situation as nonproblematic.

Most, yet not all, of vice principal supervision of students focuses on the conduct of students when they are not under the direct supervision of teachers. The vice principals regularly supervise students before school, during passing periods, breaks and lunch, and after school. The same is true during school assemblies, pep rallies, athletic events, school dances, and other large gatherings of students during and after school hours.

Although the vice principals typically do not supervise students while under the direct supervision of teachers, they do respond to referrals from

teachers and other staff regarding student class conduct. Referrals include such things as "disrupting a class" and "profanity in class."

In addition to and while supervising student conduct, the vice principals supervise a range of other aspects of the school which might upset regularity and/or threaten values. Some of these include general supervision of buildings and grounds for appropriate functioning of systems, physical hazards, and unauthorized people on campus.

Monitoring

A key element in supervision is monitoring. The vice principals monitor by continually surveying their schools for indications that organizational regularity and values prevail. Most surveying involves looking for signs that student conduct complies with the regularity and conforms with the values of the school.

Monitoring poses problems for vice principals. In comparison to the number of vice principals at each school who monitor students, the number of students is large, about 2,000 at each of the three schools. Individual student conduct in a group of 2,000 students does not stand out very much. Additionally, the size of the campuses, the arrangement of the buildings and the configuration of the buildings, make viewing very many students at any one time almost impossible. Furthermore, the interpretation of student conduct as appropriate or inappropriate is sometimes difficult. For example, the distinction between horseplay and hazing among boys is not always clear.

In spite of the conditions which make monitoring difficult, the vice principals nonetheless rely primarily on direct personal observation. All the vice principals locate themselves and engage in activities which facilitate direct personal observation. All the vice principals have

personal offices in their school office complexes. In and about each complex is a rich confluence of information from a variety of sources. The vice principals are always attentive to cues in the information flow regarding the state of student conduct in and about the campus.

With the exception of Mr. Graham at Nelson High School, all vice principals have a window in or very near their offices. At Mountain View, the window in Mrs. Dillon's office allows her to easily view the front of the school where students park their cars and frequently gather. At the same school, Mr. Michaels has a window in his office which allows him to continually monitor the central quad area of the school. At Rogers High School, Mr. Krough has a window which faces on the front of the school. By stepping out of his office and looking beyond a secretarial work area, he has a full view of the school's central quad. Mrs. Dillon, Mr. Michaels and Mr. Krough continually observe the activities beyond their windows for indications of appropriate student conduct.

The vice principals extend their surveillance of student conduct beyond their offices by regularly patrolling their campuses. All of the vice principals have a more or less regular beat which takes them around their campuses to places and at times when student misconduct has a high probability of occurring. Similarly, the vice principals make it a point to be at large public and semi-public school events and move around to various locations where they are able to view student conduct in general, and to find misconduct in particular.

Not only do the vice principals attend to verbal and visual cues of students, they also are sensitive to other subtle cues. Some of these include the smell of smoke, paper, wood, cigarettes, or marijuana,

or the presence of certain sounds, squealing tires, firecrackers, or sirens. These and other cues allow the vice principals to monitor their campus beyond immediate visual and voice cues.

The vice principals use devices to improve the efficiency and extend the range of monitory activities. All of the vice principals have phones in their offices which connect them to various locations beyond the central office complex. Teachers, staff, and others are encouraged to phone the vice principals when problems occur. Mrs. Krough at Rogers and Mr. Michaels at Mountain View carry walkie-talkies which connect them with various attendants on campus. Mr. Michaels patrols the large flat campus at Mountain View High School using a quiet electric golf cart.

The past experiences of the vice principals as vice principals allows them to assess the general probability of appropriate student conduct and/or misconduct on their campuses. The vice principals adjust their monitoring activities around these probabilities. They know that at certain times of the day, certain days of the week, certain weeks of the year, and in certain locations and situations, there are relatively high probabilities of student misconduct. Yet, the vice principals also know from past experience that they will not be able to predict with much certainty when misconduct will occur, or who or what will be involved.

Although monitoring is usually conducted by the vice principal through direct personal observation, the vice principals do rely upon other means. Each of the high schools has a "referral" system. Teachers refer students and other problems to the vice principals verbally and in writing. Similarly the vice principals rely upon a number of informants, including counselors, other administrators, parents, and students, to provide them with indications that organizational stability prevails or is problematic.

Considering the extensive and intensive monitoring activities of the vice principals, it is not unexpected that they are regarded, at least by students, as the administrators who know what is going on in the school.

Support

The vice principals continually support the organization of their schools by engaging in activities which are believed to reinforce organizational regularity and promote organizational values. More specifically, the vice principals engage in actions which are believed to reinforce student conduct with respect to organizational regularity and/or to promote student conduct with respect to organizational values. Typical supporting activities include attending and enthusiastically participating in a variety of traditional school events, for example, wearing a hat on "crazy hat day," or assisting individuals or small group of students prepare for and participate in school activities.

Typically the vice principals find supporting activities pleasant, yet not easy. They are pleasant because vice principals find that they receive praise and compliments from students and staff members for engaging in these activities. The vice principals find them not particularly easy for two reasons. First, supporting activities are limited by other demands, specifically monitoring and remediating activities. And secondly, the resources the vice principals have to support compliance with regularity and conformance with values of the school are limited. By and large the only resource the vice principals have to engage in supporting activities is their own personal presence.

Although the vice principals find their time and resources limited, they regularly and continually engage in supporting activities. Typically these activities take place in two different types of settings.

One is with individual students or a small group of students; the other is in the presence of large numbers of students.

In their offices and while on patrol the vice principals encounter numerous students. Many of these they know by name. It is not uncommon for the vice principals to stop and talk briefly with the students they know. The conversation usually centers on the students' participation in athletics, school activities, or personal hobbies. Their conversations have an enthusiastic person-to-person character. Through these types of conversations the vice principals let students know that they are worthy individuals and as such are participating in the school in an appropriate manner.

Not only do the vice principals support appropriate conduct through personal encounters, they also encourage exemplary conduct. For example, a vice principal, not directly included in the study, occasionally encourages certain students to run for student body offices. He does this in an enthusiastic person-to-person manner and offers to coach them if they should decide to run. This type of interchange informs students that their conduct is indeed appropriate and that they are capable of truly exemplary conduct.

With respect to large groups, the vice principals support student conduct in two ways. One of these is through actively and enthusiastically participating in traditional activities. For example, vice principals frequently participate in pep rallies, sporting school colors and buttons. As in the case with individual encounters, the active participation of the vice principals lets students know their conduct is appropriate. Not only do vice principals participate in less formal events such as pep rallies, athletic events, and dances, they often play

an official role in certain traditional ceremonies. for example, conferring awards at athletic banquets or announcing names of graduates at graduation ceremonies. Although their role is different when acting in an official capacity than when actively participating in traditional events, the message to individual students is similar, your conduct is and remains appropriate.

Although most supporting activities of vice principals have a direct personal character, the vice principals do engage in other activities which reinforce the regularity and promote the values of the school in a less direct and more impersonal way. For example, they schedule or allow to be scheduled those activities on the activity calendar which they view as supporting appropriate student conduct. Additionally, they may single-handedly manage and coordinate certain of these events, adjusting bell schedules, reserving auditoriums or gymnasiums, securing public address systems, and the like.

Considering the range of activities in which the vice principals engage in supporting the regularity and values of the school, it is not surprising that it is a vice principal, from the students' perspective, who must be "seen" to get things done.

Remediation

As noted earlier, remediation involves those activities which are believed to transform situations viewed as upsetting organizational regularity and/or threatening organizational values. For the vice principals, remediation involves those activities which are believed to transform student misconduct to comply with the regularity and/or conform with the values of the school.

The term vice principals use for describing most student misconduct in disruption. The term they use for describing the full range of activities they employ for remediating student disruptions is discipline. Discipline covers a broad range of student disruptions ranging from minor to very serious. In the high schools, formal school rules exist for student conduct deemed particularly disruptive which occurs more or less regularly. Associated with formal school rules are a variety of organizational sanctions which if applied are believed, in part, to transform disruptive student conduct into nondisruptive conduct. It is important to note that at the schools included in the study, there are few, if any, school rules which apply to minor disruptions. The same is true for very serious disruptions.

At the four high schools there are four overlapping categories of disruptions. These include: (1) "minor disruptions," (2) "not very serious disruptions," (3) "serious disruptions," and (4) "very serious disruptions."

Minor disruptions include, for example, situations where students leave lunch trays on cafeteria tables, return to class slowly after a school assembly, or kiss on the campus. These typically are viewed as passing events which momentarily upset the regularity and/or threaten the values of the school. As noted earlier, there are few, if any, formal school rules which address these situations.

There are two types of not very serious disruptions. One type centers on isolated personal conduct; the other is concerned with personal conduct in social situations. The first type includes, for example, situations where a student is late for class (tardiness), does not attend class (cutting), or is truant from school (skipping). The second type includes

situations where a student "disrupts a class," or is "inappropriately dressed," or where students are "displaying affection."

These activities are viewed as upsetting the regulatory and/or threatening the values of the school. Personal punctuality and attendance issues upset personal regularity, grooming issues threaten school values, and class disruptions involve both regularity and values. In the three high schools formal school rules exist which address not very serious disruptions.

With few exceptions, serious disruptions involve the personal conduct of students in social situations. When a situation involves a student and an adult, it is considered more serious than if it involves only students. For example, a student threatening a teacher is considered more serious than a student hazing another student. "Forgery," "smoking," "gambling," "profanity," "defiance of authority," "fighting," and "threatening a teacher" are examples of serious disruptions. These activities are viewed as substantially upsetting regularity and threatening values of the school. In all three high schools there are formal school rules which address serious disruptions.

Very serious disruptions, with few exceptions, involve personal conduct of students in social situations where both students and adults are present. A student "streaking" during a school assembly is an example. Very serious disruptions not only upset the regularity and threaten the values of the school, but also the community as well. Taking one's clothes off and running through a crowded assembly is viewed as not only upsetting the order of the assembly and threatening the value of public modesty, but is also viewed as offending the community in general. Very serious disruptions occur infrequently and are not typically addressed by school rules.

Although schools are known for their numerous rules regarding student conduct, the number of rules is relatively small when compared to all possible conduct which could vary from school regularity and/or deviate from school values. It is important to note that the vice principals not only respond to disruptions which are formalized in terms of school rules, but they also respond to a host of variations and deviations which are not addressed in formal school rules. Hence, it is important to emphasize that the vice principals monitor student conduct not only in terms of formal rules, but also in terms of implicit regulations embodied in the master schedule and/or norms embodied in the activity calendar.

The vice principals find disciplining students involved in disruptive conduct not particularly pleasant and also somewhat difficult. Discipline is not pleasant because it typically involves challenging, angry, and/or hostile students (and sometimes teachers and parents as well). It is difficult because the vice principals have only moderately effective resources available to transform student misconduct, this is to say to discipline students.

The vice principals at the three high schools rely on two types of resources in disciplining students. These include organizational sanctions associated with formal rules and their own personal presence. At the high schools, organizational sanctions are similar. At Rogers these include: (1) contacting a student's parent, (2) assigning a student "extra work," (3) suspending a student, (4) holding a "conference" with a student's parents, and (5) expelling a student from school. At none of the high schools is physical punishment of students sanctioned and, similarly, expulsion of a student from school is a rare occurrence. The sanctions can be used in varying combinations and intensities, yet

the vice principals find them to be only moderately effective in remediating student misconduct. Although organizational sanctions are well known in each school, the vice principals tend primarily to employ their own personal presence to remedy misconduct and secondarily use organizational sanctions.

The vice principals use a variety of distinct personal images when remediating student conduct. They can and do change images quickly and easily. Mr. Michaels refers to his images as the "policeman" and "father confessor." All the vice principals at different times display these general images. However, each of these general images is a category of several other images. The policeman category includes the drill sergeant, mother superior, and bully images. The father confessor image includes the empathizer and helper images.

Some examples will be illustrative. Mr. Michaels exemplifies the drill sergeant image when he says in a commanding voice over a bull horn to a group of students, "Get off the roof." He exemplifies the mother superior image when he says in a questioning tone to a girl who is being embraced by a fellow, "What would your mother think about this?" He exemplifies the bully image when he says in a loud voice to a boy who left class without permission, "Listen little fellow, the next time you leave early from class, just keep on going and we'll drop you from the class. I'm going to see Mrs. Jones and see what the trouble is. . . ." Mrs. Dillon exemplifies the empathizer image when she listens patiently to a girl who recounts the details of an incident where she and her friends were swearing at each other. Mrs. Dillon exemplifies the helper image when she says in a low soft voice to the girl, "If they want to cuss, let them cuss. That's the only trick you have to remember. It's

hard. Try not to let it bother you. You must remember yourself." The images and institutional sanction used in various combinations constitute the resources the vice principals use in remediating student misconduct.

The vice principals spend most of the school day monitoring student conduct in and around their respective offices and on their campuses. Part of supervising includes supporting student conduct. However, by far the majority of supervision involves remediating student misconduct.

The process the vice principals use to remediate misconduct is conditioned by four factors. These include: (1) the type of disruption, (2) the reputation of the student or students involved, (3) the context of the disruption, and (4) the load on the system, i.e., what else of importance the vice principal must attend to.

In general, the vice principals remediate disruptions in descending order of importance--very serious, serious, not very serious, and minor. In times of heavy load on the system, minor disruptions may be overlooked and serious disruptions may be treated as minor disruptions.

Typically the vice principals deal with minor disruptions immediately and spontaneously. For example, students lingering in a hallway following the lunch period are commanded to get on to class. Students engaged in not very serious disruptions are referred by both teachers and vice principals to "the vice principal's office" and as time permits, the vice principals deal with the referrals. Serious disruptions are dealt with immediately. Students fighting on campus are escorted to "the office" by the vice principal. At the office discipline proceeds immediately. Very serious disruptions are also dealt with immediately. With such cases discipline is initiated, but is then delayed. Because serious disruptions are typically of such gravity and occur so infrequently, vice principals

"buy time" to inform and seek advice from the school principal or other vice principals.

In general, students with a developed history of disruption are dealt with by the vice principals in a rather routine and impersonal fashion. In contrast, students with no history of disruption are dealt with in a more emotional way.

The context of a disruption can be understood in terms of the visibility, ages, and statuses of those involved. In general, a disruption will be viewed as more serious than it otherwise would if it has high visibility and involves individuals of different ages and statuses. By contrast, if a disruption has limited visibility and involves individuals of the same ages and statuses, it will be viewed as less serious than it otherwise would.

Regardless of the conditioning factors, the remediating process the vice principals use across different types of disruptions, remains about the same. The process can be viewed as an interaction ritual between a vice principal and a student. An example will illustrate a typical complete ritual. The vice principal confronts the student with the accusation: "Mrs. Smith says that you were rude in class." The vice principal requests an accounting: "What do you have to say for yourself?" The student gives an account: "Mrs. Smith just kept yelling at me and I said" The vice principal offers to accept an apology: "What should we do about this?" The student gives an apology: "I should be given detention and apologize to Mrs. Smith." The vice principal provides assistance: "I think an apology to Mrs. Smith will be sufficient. I know Mrs. Smith gets upset somedays and it's difficult. But there are a lot of Mrs. Smiths in the world and you can't let them bother you. Why don't you speak to Mrs. Smith

before school tomorrow." The student confirms a willingness to engage in appropriate conduct: "I'll come early tomorrow and see Mrs. Smith."

During the ritual the image of the vice principal changes. In the confronting, requesting, and accounting stages, the vice principal present a general policeman image. During the apologizing, assisting, and confirming stages, the vice principal presents a general father confessor image.

The ritual may be stop at various steps. For example, a student may give an account in which misconduct is denied. In this case, the vice principal may believe the student's statement and dismiss the student. If the vice principal disbelieves the student, the student will be sent to a waiting area and the vice principal will seek more information. If further information leads the vice principal to conclude that the denial was a lie, the student will be confronted now with two offenses, the original one and lying, and the ritual will begin again.

Although rituals will vary in many details, two additional general statements can be made. First, the more complete a ritual, the more the formal sanctions will be reduced by the vice principals. And secondly, if a student has a history of being chronically disruptive, the vice principal will terminate the ritual following the account step and prescribe sanctions or dismiss the student. In the latter case, vice principals know from past experience further steps will not likely have a remediating effect on the student.

Although most of the remediation work of the vice principals involves direct personal presence with students, vice principals also engage in indirect activities which are oriented to remediating student misconduct. These include clarifying rules and developing new ones. Similarly, the

vice principals modify, refine, and develop new organizational sanctions associated with rules. Furthermore, the vice principals suggest and/or make changes in master schedules in an attempt to reduce campus disruptions, for example, shortening the lunch period or adding a morning snack break to the schedule.

In addition to their work related to the master schedules, calendars, and supervision, the vice principals have a variety of ancillary responsibilities. These include, for example, evaluating teachers and preparing institutional reports. These activities, however important to the organization, are not central to the vice principals' daily work. The vice principals get evaluating, reporting, and other similar responsibilities accomplished; however, these are done when "school activity is low" or when students are not present, after school hours, during evenings, and on weekends. When ancillary responsibilities are undertaken during school hours, the supervision of students and its various components take precedence.

In conclusion, it is important to note four salient characteristics associated with the secondary vice principalships in large comprehensive high schools. First, these administrators work primarily with students and not adults. Through their work with students, vice principals become highly visible to students. Hence, vice principals are regarded by students as being the most important administrators in the high school. However, this regard is not shared by other administrators in the school district. Secondly, vice principals have an unscheduled work day; however, they are expected to respond immediately to a variety of unanticipated events. Hence, the vice principals cannot schedule their own work day and control the pace of their work to keep it from being physically exhausting. Thirdly, vice principals are expected to support student

activities and, in general, support the "positive side of the school." However, the majority of the vice principals' time and attention is devoted to student discipline, the "negative side of the school." Hence, the vice principals tend to develop a cynical orientation toward students in general. And, finally, although the vice principals have personal and direct responsibility for student discipline, discipline problems do not diminish in their schools very much. Hence, the vice principals have difficulty in claiming credit for being an effective administrator and defending themselves against criticism of not being particularly effective.

Summary

The theory presented has attempted to develop a theoretical understanding of the work associated with the secondary vice principalship in large, comprehensive, American public secondary schools. Moreover, the theory has attempted to formulate a theoretical understanding of the relationship between the work associated with the vice principalship and the school as an organization. The theory developed is summarized in the following paragraphs and the salient aspects of it are displayed in Figure 2.

Large, comprehensive, American public high schools can be considered to have two organizational domains. These include the curriculum and extracurriculum. The curriculum is largely a translation of state laws, whereas the extracurriculum is largely an interpretation of community values. The manifestation of a school's curriculum is its master schedule. Also the master schedule largely embodies the school's organizational regularity. The manifestation of a school's extracurriculum is its activity calendar. Also the activity calendar largely embodies the school's organizational values.

Springing from the master schedule are individual student schedules; associated with the activity calendar are individual student activity calendars. School student conduct arises as students fulfill their scheduled class obligations and meet their activity commitments.

As already noted, embodied in the master schedule is organizational regularity. Part of the regularity is manifested as a set of school regulations. Similarly, embodied in the activity calendar are organizational values. Some of the values are manifested as a collection of school norms. Collectively, regulations and/or norms are formalized as school rules.

Not all students fulfill their scheduled obligations and meet their activity commitments in accordance with school rules. This is to say, some student conduct varies from organizational regularity and/or deviates from organizational values. Noncompliance with school regulations and/or nonconformance with school values is viewed by school administrators as a threat to organizational stability.

Secondary vice principals as school administrators are charged with establishing and maintaining organizational stability. With respect to establishing organizational stability in large, comprehensive, public high schools, a vice principal likely has the task of establishing the school's master schedule and/or developing the school's activity calendar. With respect to maintaining the stability of the school, one or more vice principals likely have the task of supervising students, particularly when they are not under the direct supervision of teachers.

Supervision involves three related activities, monitoring, supporting, and remediating (disciplining). For the most part, monitoring involves surveying the school for signs that student conduct complies with the regularity and/or conforms with the values of the school. Support largely

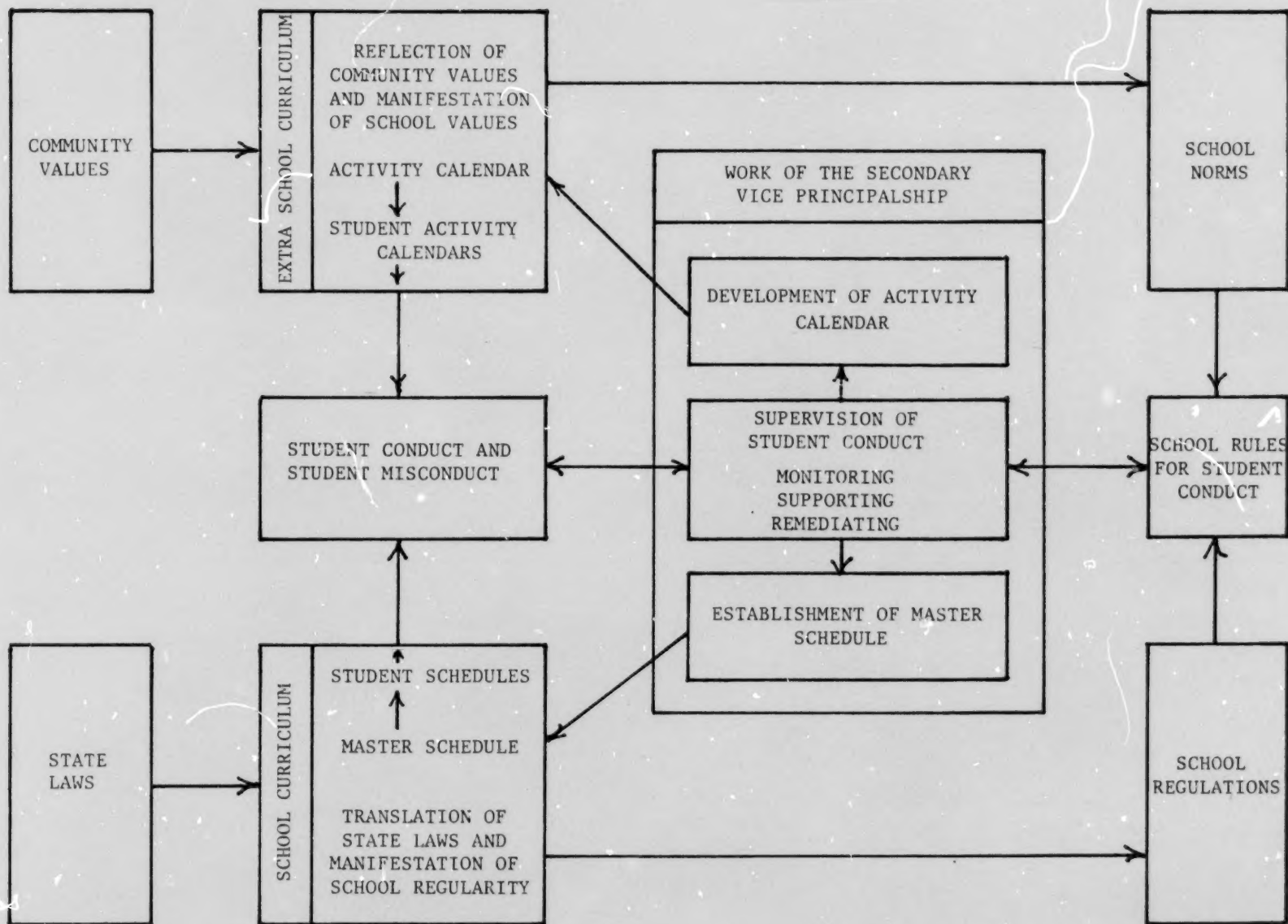


Figure 2. The Work of the Secondary Vice Principal in Relation to the School as an Organization.

involves activities which reinforce student conduct with respect to school regularity and/or promote student conduct with respect to school values. Remediation largely involves activities which transform student misconduct to comply with the regularity and/or conform with the values of the school.

For the most part, vice principals use personal observation to monitor student conduct. Similarly they rely upon personal presence to support student conduct and remediate student misconduct. Vice principals personally observe student conduct by continually moving about the school attending to cues that indicate individual student conduct complies with the regularity and conforms with the values of the school. Vice principals use different personal images to support student conduct and remediate misconduct. In supporting student conduct, they present enthusiastic and friendly images. In remediating student misconduct they present "policeman" and "father confessor" images.

Vice principals remediate student misconduct employing interaction rituals. A typical ritual involves six steps. The student is confronted and requested by the vice principal to give an accounting of his/her conduct. The student provides an accounting and then an offer is extended by the vice principal to accept an apology from the student. The student apologizes and assistance is provided by the vice principal to help transform the student. Assistance is provided and the student confirms to the vice principal that transformation has been accomplished.

It is not claimed that the theory presented in this and other sections of this paper is a complete and comprehensive theory of the secondary vice principalship. The theory does provide a step toward a theoretical understanding of the secondary vice principalship in large, comprehensive,

American high schools and helps to reduce the ambiguity surrounding the work of this school administrative position.

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